

A Proposed Statute

Mandatory Use of Skin Protection for All Individuals Under the Age of 18

Whereas it is well documented that only 15 percent of Americans regularly wear a sunscreen when they are outside, and 25 percent never wear sunscreen.

Whereas there is a direct link between the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays and melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.

Whereas there were more than 42,000 new cases of malignant melanoma diagnosed in 1999.

Whereas more than 7,000 Americans die each year from melanoma.

Whereas disruption of the earth's ozone layer by atmospheric chemical pollution may lead to rising levels of UV radiation.

Whereas 80 percent of a person's UV exposure occurs prior to age 18.

Be it enacted by the Federal Statutes that:

All individuals under the age of 18 are required to wear headgear and clothing that covers 90 percent of the extremities while outside during peak hours of UV exposure. This covering shall occur in all public locations that are currently under federal jurisdiction, including public school property, recreation sites, federal buildings, and work sites supervised by employers that are overseen by OSHA regulations.

Getting Prepared to Support or Oppose the Statute

Follow the steps below to develop your list of reasons to support or oppose the proposed statute.

1. Spend about 5 minutes in a brainstorming session identifying reasons to support the statute and reasons to oppose it. Fill these reasons into the table on page 5.2b.
2. View the video clips on the CD-ROM (*A Proposed Statute* and *The People Respond*) that show people commenting on the proposed statute. What questions do these people raise? Add these issues to the table.
3. Ask yourself what additional information about UV light and skin cancer might help strengthen your position. For example, you may wish to look for evidence to support the reasons you have listed or for information that can help you answer the following questions:
 - What is skin cancer? Who is most at risk? What outcomes can people who develop skin cancer expect? What outcomes does society experience as a result of skin cancer?
 - How can people reduce or prevent dangerous exposure to UV radiation? How effective are these different methods of protection?
 - Is UV exposure really a risk factor related to skin cancer? When and where does most exposure occur? Are there other important sources of UV exposure?
 - Are there other cases where society has limited behavior for public health reasons? For example, what can we learn from the Australian experience with skin cancer? Are there other examples of limiting behavior for public health reasons? How effective are they?

Reasons to Support or Oppose the Statute

To Support the Statute	To Oppose the Statute

Analyzing the Results of a Public Policy Discussion

Answer the following questions related to the public policy discussion you just completed.

1. What revisions, if any, would you make to the statute in the light of the reasons you heard?

2. What other suggestions can you make about reducing the incidence and impact of skin cancer in the United States?

3. How does this activity illustrate that
 - good choices can reduce a person's chance of developing cancer?

 - values sometimes conflict in debates about laws related to personal and public health?

 - it is possible for people to hold different positions on a controversial topic and still participate in a reasoned discussion about it?

4. How has research about cancer helped improve personal and public health in the United States?
Answer specifically, using examples drawn from all five of the activities in this module.